

PARLIAMENTARY REPORT



**THOMAS SULUK, M.P.
NUNATSIAQ**

POLAR
PAM
1027

POLARPAM



Dear Constituents:

It seems such a long time ago when you sent me to Ottawa to represent you at the national level. It has been a time of change for me and my family. Whether the change in government has affected any real change in the north, apart from more artificial talks about cutbacks remains to be seen. The level of funding for Nunatsiak has not changed since government support of our northern economy is so evident.

There has been concern from individuals, businesses, groups, etc. over the N.C.P.C. proposed rate increases. There again, our dependence on government subsidies become evident. The present uncertainty is not helping any small businesses which are meagre enough and could put a damper on renewed interest in private home ownership.

In the area of visiting the communities, there can never be enough of those. However, I have managed to visit ten communities since September, 1984. Granted there is never sufficient time between community, organizational and home visits, not to mention my responsibilities in the House of Commons and its committees, including answering constituency letters.

In the area of political development, there have been many highs and lows, but mostly lows recently. Never has Nunavut been so near and yet so far. In the same way that it is difficult for D.I.A.N.D. to break itself up unless it is done externally, so too it seems for the N.W.T. to divide up nicely unless it is done from the outside. Whether the Federal Government is willing to act as the catalyst, or whether the communities wish to force the issue remains to be seen. My role in promoting

it at the federal level has gone as far as it can be pushed at this time. Perhaps we will have to wait until our children can grow up and have sufficient political knowledge and courage to go through with self-government. The fact that the western forces of News of the North, C.B.C.'s Focus North and all their players who stand to lose the most were able to sing the same tune, not to mention the slight majority of the western M.L.A.'s seems more than likely to ensure the status quo for the next little while.

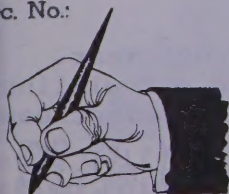
I would however, like to close on a positive note. Spring is coming. Twenty-four hour daylight in the High Arctic when political issues will take a back seat to camping, renewing one's tie to the land and thereby indirectly renewing one's spirit to face the coming months. This is a time when one would not trade one's 'Inukness' for anything in the world. This is the time when we will not need permission from the government to do what we like doing best. A time when the N.H.L. playoffs take precedence and school will be finished for at least two months. If a few of us ordinary Members of Parliament should drop in to your community to enjoy the sunshine, we hope you will not mind our intrusion.

Finally, contrary to past press reports that I was ready to resign or cross over to the Opposition, that is the last thing on my mind. As a matter of fact, I am just warming up and enjoying every minute of it.

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Sincerely,

Thomas Suluk



Thomas Suluk, M.P.
Nunatsiak

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MORE JOBS FOR STUDENTS THIS SUMMER

A new summer employment program, Challenge '85, was introduced by the Federal Government to help students find challenging and rewarding jobs this summer.

Priority is on providing summer jobs that relate to students and their course of studies. It is essential for students to earn enough money to go back to school next fall, and to give them work experience they are going to need when they graduate. By providing this work experience, we can avoid the situation down the road of high school and university graduates who are unable to find work because they have no experience.

They will emerge from school better prepared to join the labour market because they had a chance to see how the real world worked at a time when they could apply this knowledge to their future studies.

It costs approximately \$10,000 to train a new permanent employee . For businesses, this represents a sizable investment. By participating in Challenge '85, however, you can begin this training now and you can have a considerable portion of the cost defrayed by taking advantage of the 50% wage subsidy paid by the government. Municipal governments and non-profit sectors can defray even more expenses. All that is asked in return is that you provide students with meaningful work that will help them become better students and, later on, better employees.

1985 is International Youth Year. The future of our youth depends on our willingness to bring young people into the mainstream of our economic life. As a community, we owe it to our young people to give them a helping hand and allow their potential to be realized.

Thomas Suluk participated in the opening of the 10th Legislative Assembly of the N.W.T. Government in Yellowknife on February 5, 1985. From left to right, Denis Cooligan, former Appointed Councillor to the N.W.T. Legislative Assembly 1961 to 1963; Barry Turner, M.P.; Dave Nickerson, M.P. for Western Arctic; Thomas; Gordon Robertson, Former Commissioner, N.W.T. and John Parker, Commissioner, N.W.T.



Patsy Owljoot, constituency secretary in Eskimo Point.

House of Commons Debates
Friday, March 1, 1985
The Indian Act

Mr. Thomas Suluk (Nunatsiak): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to take part in the discussion of changes to the Indian Act. I would first of all like to congratulate the Minister on his excellent and rewarding speech, as well as all other Hon. Members who discussed the need to rectify many of the wrongs relating to native people in general. Although I have never been quite sure whether Inuit do in fact fall under the Indian Act, I will attempt to illustrate to Members of the House that there are still opportunities to avoid many of the things that are wrong with the Indian Act. Specifically, I would like to make some initial comments about what is happening with the same kind of issues that northern people are dealing with at the present time, or at this moment in history.

Although the Indian Act, Mr. Speaker, was created many, many years ago, and perhaps many of its contents may not have foreseen the problems that might develop such as the ones we are now dealing with, we are also dealing with many of the same kinds of difficult issues in the north through the land claims forum, the modern treaties as it were, which are being conducted between the Governments and other native peoples of Canada. I would just like to give some brief examples.

First of all, a few years ago the Inuit were discussing the problems that might be coming up as a result of any land claim settlement, and we were discussing at one time at what stage we would stop calling Inuit the Inuit in terms of their blood relationships. For example, would we stop calling someone an Inuit when it gets to the 25 per cent stage? That is where the child has only 10 per cent, 15 per cent or 25 per cent of native blood or Inuit blood. Many of these things were very technical and very disconcerting to many of the Inuit in my riding, especially in the Northwest Territories. I would hope that before agreements of this type are reached again with other native people in Canada, specifically those in the Western Arctic areas and in the Eastern Arctic areas, both the Government and the people negotiating on behalf of the respective Indian or Inuit side would foresee many of these problems that governments in the future might have to deal with.

I would just like to relate a brief story about how discrimination against Inuit women was dealt with by one community. It is not dealt with across the Territories but we have a very classic example in my own town of Eskimo Point, Northwest Territories. It concerns the Inuit ladies who are married to Kabloonat, as we call them. In much the same way as we are known as Eskimos to some southerners, we also refer to non-Inuit in the south as Kabloonat. It is not a derogatory term by any means, just a reference that we do have in the north. Inuit women who are married to Kabloonat, that is, not Inuit or, I think the term is, Caucasian or something, did not have the rights and were starting to complain because they could not hunt polar bears. Traditionally, only Inuit men hunt polar bears. However, the polar bear skin has quite a lot of value. In the north, where the economy is not all that great, you can get \$1,000 or \$2,000 for a polar bear skin, and then naturally it becomes a desirable thing to have. To go back to the story about the Inuit women who felt discriminated against, they raised a big issue out of it in the local press—well, there is no press, just the radio and public meetings and all that—and said that because their husbands are not Inuit and therefore could not hunt, they are being discriminated against.

It turned out that after a lot of discussions and a lot of talking back and forth and a few harsh words here and there, the situation was resolved to the point where the Inuit ladies ended up being allowed to hunt polar bear. Now, people did not raise eyebrows when those ladies went out hunting and perhaps their husbands, who may be non-Inuit, pulled the trigger, but at least for the sake of peace the issue was resolved. I think there is an opportunity nowadays to rectify a lot of things and avoid a lot of problems that are inherent in the Indian Act, especially Section 12(1)(b).

I understand that the amendments are going to remove the discrimination against Indian women and would also give the Indian bands the ability to determine who would be eligible, and I think that would satisfy both sides. It would not necessarily be to everyone's satisfaction, but in relation to what is happening in the Northwest Territories, at least they have something which they could sink their teeth into.

I would now like to discuss briefly what I heard many Members making reference to, and that is colonial governments and the need to avoid the same situation. There is in fact this opportunity in the Northwest Territories. For example, many of you may have read certain items in the newspapers since the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Crombie) announced that the Government would agree to the creation of two territories out of the existing territory if the boundaries could be resolved by the northerners themselves. The discussions about self government and the division of the Northwest Territories has been going on for the last eight years. However, charges of discrimination against non-Inuit, or specifically charges that northerners wish to create ethnic governments, have been advanced by people who generally oppose the majority of the Inuit population. In the proposed Eastern Arctic territory people of Inuit origin, such as myself, would be in the majority by about 80 per cent.

I would like to raise a question here. One of the obstacles to the agreement by the federal Government to allow northerners to create two territories was that the Inuit were trying to create an ethnic government. In fact, we are willing to be assimilated. We are willing to take a colonial style territorial government such as now exists in our area, and mould it into our own. We will accept that. Earlier this week in one of the Canadian Press reports there was a reference once again to ethnicity. In earlier reports it was mentioned that the Inuit and Indians used to fight a long time ago. Mr. Speaker, we do not need to go through all these stories which do not apply any more. We are now in a modern situation. An opportunity exists in the Northwest Territories with another aboriginal group to exercise the modern ways of right and wrong.

I wanted to explain from the perspective of a native person that it is very encouraging to hear parliamentarians talking about the need to allow native people to make a contribution to the systems of government in Canada. I believe that we do have a lot of things to contribute to the Canadian system if we could only avoid the pitfalls which have dogged many of the discussions relating to aboriginal rights, such as the constitutional discussions, the land claims discussions and other discussions relating either to Indian or to native self-government. I would like to encourage Members here, especially the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to keep the dialogue going, because there are answers to the problems.

I would like to conclude my remarks by saying that I have had representations from Indian bands both for and against changes to Clause 12(1)(b). I have heard and can identify with many of the remarks made about problems that may develop as a result of these changes. I have also heard representations from women who are very concerned about the discriminatory clauses of the Indian Act. I think that the amendments which are now being proposed could satisfy both sides of the camp. We should accept the changes as they are being proposed, knowing that there will be other opportunities in the future to discuss these in a very gentlemanly fashion if we discover more things that do not work out.



GOVERNOR GENERAL AWARDS BRAVERY MEDAL

Her Excellency the Governor General Jean Sauve awarded Charlie Manning of Cape Dorset the Medal for Bravery at Government House on March 15th.

During the afternoon of September 18th, 1983 Charlie rescued Joanie Ottokie and Ejesiak Pitseolak from drowning in Higher Fish Lake.

The trio had travelled northward to an isolated area to check their fishing nets. Non-swimmers Joannie and Ejesiak were in the canoe when it capsized. Seeing his friends in danger from the shore, Charlie dove in. Their strength was diminishing rapidly in the cold water, Charlie swam the seventy-five metres to the canoe while urging them to hang on.

Although himself a poor swimmer, Charlie sustained his efforts and pulled the overturned canoe to shore as Joannie and Ejesiak clung to its sides. On reaching land, he was nearly exhausted but quickly lit a fire and kept the practically unconscious pair awake and warm until they recovered.

Pictured below is Thomas and Charlie at the reception of the Governor General's.



SPOUSES ALLOWANCE

Bill C-26 was introduced into the House of Commons January 26th, 1985. It will provide for Spouse's Allowance to be paid to all qualified low-income widowed persons aged 60-64, regardless of the age of their spouse at death, effective September 1985.

The maximum benefit of \$541.62 per month will be paid to those with no income. The allowance will be reduced to zero as income rises to \$10,728. The income cutoffs are indexed to inflation every three months.

Potential beneficiaries must apply to receive benefits.





The Suluk Family attending Church in Eskimo Point.



Jimmy Muckpa of Eskimo Point and Thomas check out hunting gear.

THE HIGH COST OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE NORTH

The rising cost of air transportation in the North is an issue of great concern to the people of our riding. In a region where air travel is a necessity and not a privilege, and where few travel alternatives exist, this mode of transportation has become a luxury that few, but business travellers and subsidized employees can afford.

Tasks often taken for granted in the Southern marketplace with its competitive road, rail, marine and air services are difficult in the North when one must rely on a costly transportation system. Visiting friends and relatives, developing new businesses and transporting goods to and within the region requires careful planning and substantial financial resources.

The issue of high transportation costs in the North is complex and difficult to resolve. In this past decade there has been some discussion and review of the issue by all levels of government. Numerous studies, reviewing air and marine services have been undertaken, but their solutions to our transportation problems are difficult to assess and implement.

Direct financial assistance from the Federal Government appears to be the only realistic solution to our transportation problems. Subsidies are required if our region is to enjoy transportation parity with the rest of Canada. My office is currently researching this issue by examining past studies, reviewing current trends, and by studying ways to apply subsidies in our region to decrease high transportation costs.

I hope to bring this matter to the attention of the Members of the House of Commons in the Spring. By doing so, our transportation crisis will receive national attention and discussion. I am hopeful it will steer the Federal Government towards serious review of the need for northern transportation subsidies in the North.

On the brighter side of this issue, a current summary report on Northern air services released by the Canadian Transport Commission makes recommendations that will help reduce some of the air transportation costs in the North if implemented as policy.

Some of the recommendations call for:

- government financial assistance to help northern airlines to buy or lease more economical airplanes
- increased services in some areas to stimulate competition
- reduced government taxes, fees and charges on aircraft operations
- improvements to airports and navigation aids

If implemented, these actions will ease the operating expenses of Northern airlines and should encourage them to lower passenger fares and freight rates. It will be some time however, before we will know if these recommendations will be adopted into policy.

In the interim pressure for change related to this issue must come from both private citizens and businesses, as well as all levels of government.



NORTH AMERICAN AIR DEFENCE

The Government has signed an agreement with the United States under which the two countries will take part in a joint program to modernize the North American Air Defence Surveillance and Warning System. This agreement was signed in Quebec City March 18th.

It will provide for the establishment of a warning system around the perimeter of the North American continent which will be capable of detecting aircraft and Cruise missiles penetrating North American airspace at high and low altitudes within the atmosphere.

In the north, there will be a new and improved DEW Line--to be called the North Warning System. Most of the North Warning System will be located on Canadian soil in the Northwest Territories. The new radars will permit Canadian forces interceptors--CF-18's--to identify and, if necessary, engage intruders on the perimeter. North Warning will enhance our sovereign ability to control access to Canadian airspace.

The cost of the over-all modernization project will be \$7 billion. Design, acquisition, installation and integration of all associated communications in addition to all construction in Canada will be undertaken by Canadians and by Canadian industry.

More than 11,500 jobs will be generated in the communications and construction industries during the eight year modernization program. The project experience will help open world markets for Canadian industry and for our highly skilled communications industry in particular.

These radars are neither designed or sited for the detection of ballistic missiles or of other events in space. This is an important distinction. The new long-range radars which will form part of the North Warning System will have essentially the same range of surveillance as the existing radars of the DEW Line. However, the long-range radars will incorporate the most modern technology, and they will provide information on the direction, height and speed of aircraft entering their coverage. This information will permit Canadian forces interceptor aircraft operating from northern airstrips to identify and control potential intruders.

The DEW Line has served Canada well, but Canadians do not control it. The DEW Line is operated by the United States Air Force. Canadian involvement has been limited to small detachments of Armed Forces personnel at three of the 21 DEW Line sites in Canada. The North Warning System will be a Canadian-controlled system--operated, maintained and manned by Canadians.



Outpost camp near Eskimo Point where the Suluk Family relaxes.

CONGRATULATORY

MESSAGES

I would be pleased to make arrangements for those of you who would like to have birthday or wedding anniversary greetings sent. Please complete the form on the adjacent page and send it, postage free, to my Ottawa office.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

Anniversaries: 60 years or more
Birthdays: 100 years or more

(Three months' notice required)
Request must include a photocopy of the
birth or wedding certificate.

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

Anniversaries: 50th - 59th
Birthdays: 90th - 99th

THE PRIME MINISTER

Anniversaries: 25th - 45th
(every five years)
50th or more
(every year)
Birthdays: 75th - 90th
(every five years)
90 years or more
(every year)

(Two months notice required)

THOMAS SULUK, M.P.

Any anniversary, birthday or other
special occasion.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

NAME OF OCCASION _____

AND DATE OF OCCASION _____

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

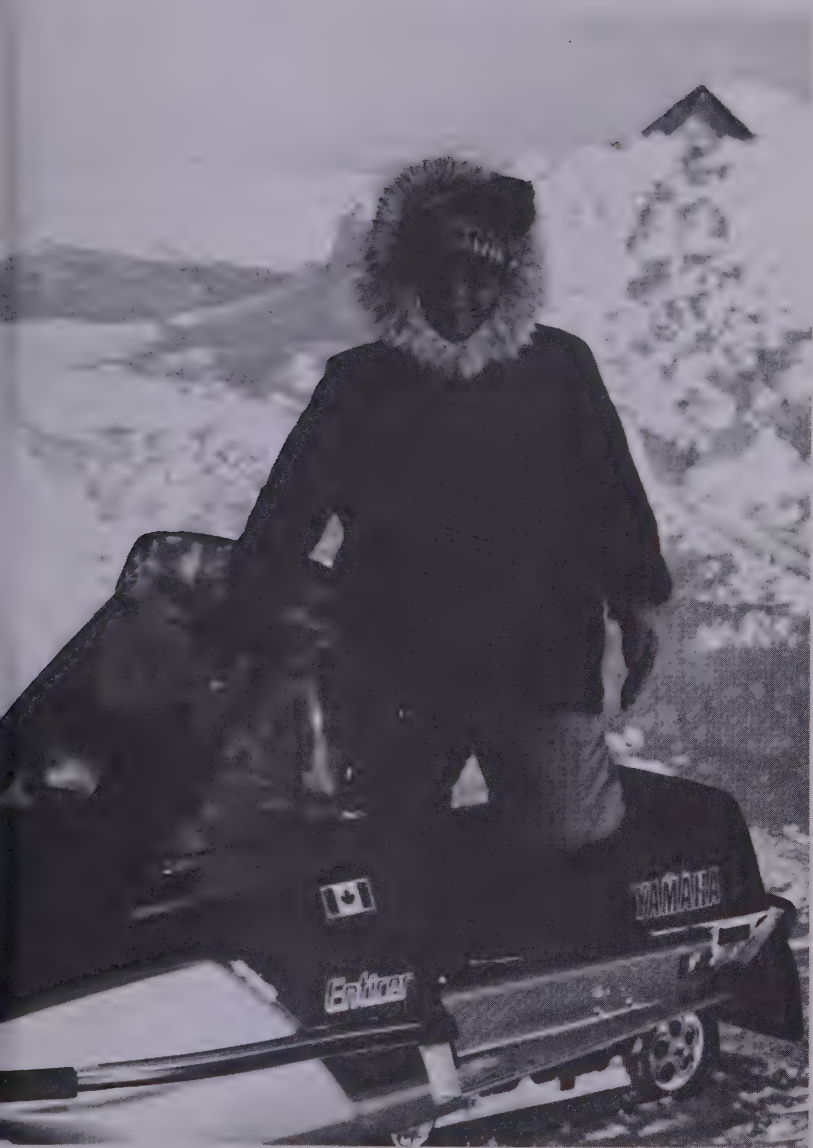
To ensure I have the correct
information about your birthday/anniversary,
please send the above to my Ottawa office.
(Remember, no postage is necessary)



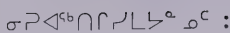
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**Mr. Thomas Suluk, M.P.
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K1A 0A6**

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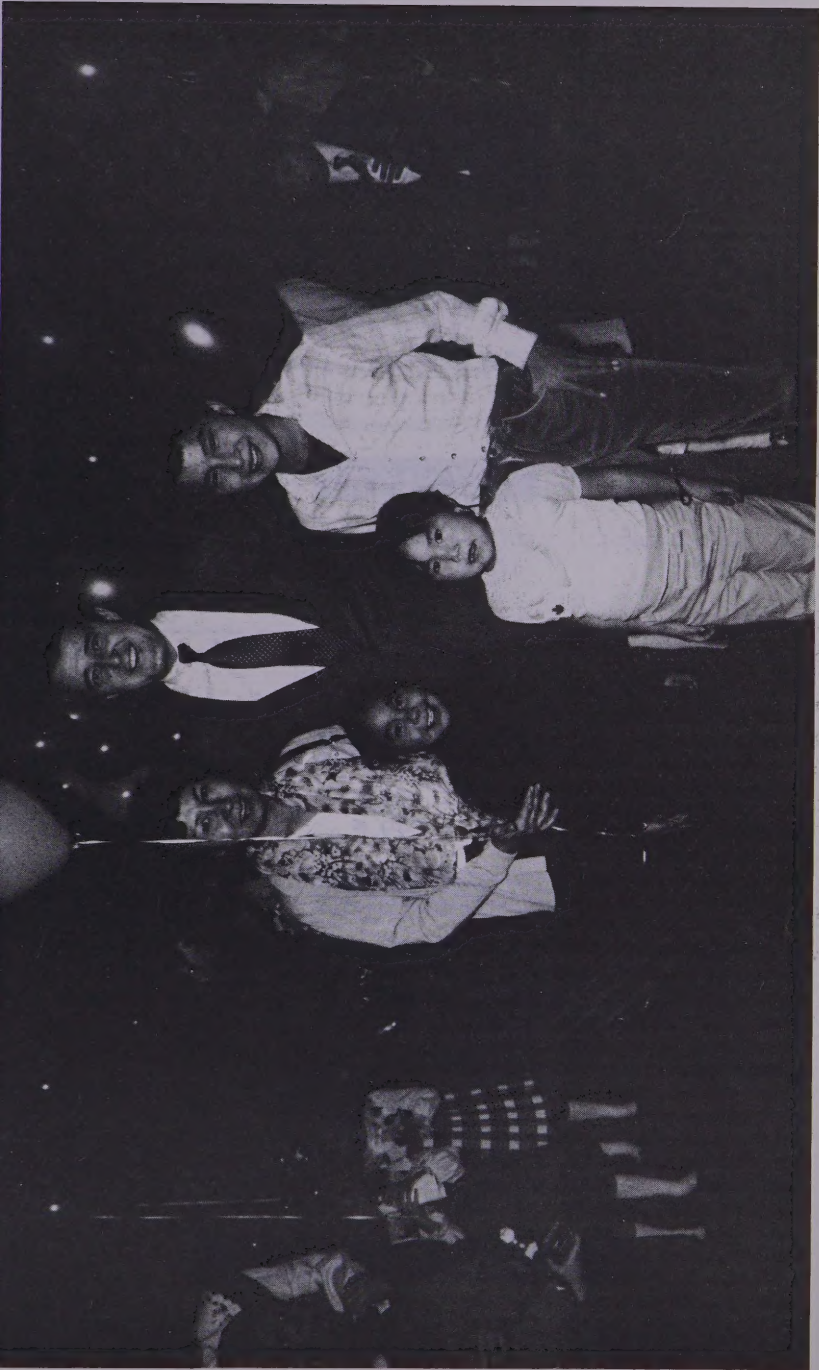
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